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Classical Music on CD: The Rough Guide, First Edition (Rough Guides)

Matthew Boyden, Matthew Rye, Simon Broughton, Joe Staines

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This guide is aimed at newcomers to classical music and at people who may already be familiar with a few pieces but want guidance on where to go next. Providing the historical framework within which to understand the music, it also discusses the music in the context of what's available on CD. The style is informal but serious - neither a guide to the 100 best classical tunes, nor a specialist volume of music criticism, but full of forthright judgements. A series of brief essays on the main genres of classical music is followed by an alphabetically arranged run-through of some 160 composers (the main body of the book). As well as all the big names - Beethoven, Bach, Mozart and Haydn all get ten-page entries - "The Rough Guide" bangs the drum on behalf of some neglected figures, with a particular effort made to rectify the neglect of women composers. Each entry comprises a brief biographical introduction, followed by sections on the crucial works. For every work discussed "The Rough Guide" recommends at least one CD, and, in the case of essential pieces, alternative performances as well. Features include: a chronological chart of composers, arranged so the reader can see at a glance who is contemporary with whom; a glossary of musical terms; an index of performers (giving biographical information and recommendations for compilation recordings); and a bibliography.

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